


HIS LADY OF THE SONNETS

ROBERT W. NORWOOD

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BY
ROBERT W. NORWOOD



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TO
MY WIFE

“ I shall never, in the years remaining,
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,
Make you music that should all-express me;
So it seems: I stand on my attainment.
This of verse alone, one life allows me;
Verse and nothing else have I to give you.
Other heights in other lives, God willing:
All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love! ”

ROBERT BROWNING.

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HIS LADY OF THE SONNETS

I

My soul awoke from slumber—the long ease
Of years that passed away in dull content,
Not caring what the world's deep voices
meant—

Sunk in my dreams, I heard their harmonies
Like wind-blown clamour of far-calling seas
That told of Ithaca to sailors spent
With trouble, and forgetful at the scent
And taste of fruit plucked from the lotus trees ;

For as I slept, your footsteps on the grass,
Your voice, wrought once again the Miracle
Of Eden ; and I saw appear and pass
Eve in her beauty, binding still the spell
That Adam felt, when from his opened side
Stepped Woman forth in loveliness and pride.

II

I MEET you in the mystery of the night,
A dear Dream-Goddess on a crescent moon;
An opalescent splendour, like a noon
Of lilies; and I wonder that the height
Should darken for the depth to give me light —
Light of your face, so lovely that I swoon
With gazing, and then wake to find how soon
Joy of the world fades when you fade from
sight.

Beholding you, I am Endymion,
Lost and immortal in Latmian dreams;
With Dian bending down to look upon
Her shepherd, whose æonian slumber seems
A moment, twinkling like a starry gem
Among the jewels of her diadem.

III

IF I could tell why, when you look at me,
Dreams that have visited half wakeful nights
Re-form and shape themselves, and Pisgah-
sights

Fill one far valley to a purple sea ;
And white-domed cities rise with porphyry,
Jacinth and sapphire gates, beneath the heights,
Rose-flamed within the dawn where Phœbus
smites

Earth with his heel — claiming its lord to be ;

Then would you know what my heart seeks to
say

And falters ere sufficient words be found :
How all the voiceless night and vocal day
Love looks on you and trembles into sound ;
Love longs and pleads for his one moment's
bliss —

You and him mingled in a silent kiss.

IV

My love is like a spring among the hills
Whose brimming waters may not be confined,
But pour one torrent through the ways that
wind

Down to a garden; there the rose distills
Its nectar; there a tall, white lily fills
Night with anointing of two lovers, blind,
Dumb, deaf, of body, spirit, and of mind
From breathless blending of far-sundered wills.

Long ere my love had reached you, hard I
strove

To send its torrent through the barren fields;
I wanted you, the lilyed treasure-trove
Of innocence, whose dear possession yields
Immortal gladness to my heart that knows
How you surpass the lily and the rose.

V

LIKE one great opal on the breast of Night,
 Soft and translucent, hangs the orb of June!
 I hear wild pipings of a joyous tune
 Played on a golden reed for the delight
 Of you, my hidden, lovely Eremite —
 You by the fountain from the marble hewn —
 You silent as in dream, with flowers strewn
 About your feet — you goddess, robed in white!

Mute and amazed, I at the broken wall
 Lean fearful, lest the sudden, dreadful dawn
 For me Diana's awful doom let fall;
 And I be cursed with curious Actæon,
 Save that you find in me this strong defence —
 My adoration of your innocence.

VI

WHEN from the rose-mist of creation grew
God's patient waiting in your wide-set eyes,
The morning stars, and all the host that flies
On wings of love, paused at the wondrous blue
With which the Master, mindful of the hue,
Stained first the crystal dome of summer skies;
And afterward the violet that vies
With amethyst, before He fashioned you.

And I have trembled with those ancient stars;
My heart has known the flame-winged seraphs'
 song;
For no indifferent, dreamy eyelid bars
Me from the blue, nor veils with lashes long
Your love, that to my tender gazing grows
Bold to confess it: I am glad he knows!

VII

THERE came three wise men riding from the
east;

One was a king and brought a gift of gold;
And one bore frankincense that fate foretold;
While myrrh was offered by a mitred priest.
Nor ever hath Love's brave adventure ceased
Since that fair night ashine with stars and cold,
When even angels paused their wings to fold —
Love to adore made one with man and beast.

Accept three gifts I to thee gladly bring;
Each hath its own divine significance:
Gold is the Body thou hast crowned a king;
My Spirit is the prophet's frankincense;
Myrrh is the Mind which strives to tell thee all
Love's mystic and melodious ritual!

VIII

SOMETIMES I think that we have lived before,
And found sweet interest down the centuries
In all life's little things that charm and please;
That we have toiled together at the oar
In one of Cæsar's galleys; that we bore
One burden on our backs and bowed the knees
Of servitude to Charlemagne; and these
Have taught us how to love for evermore.

Dear Comrade, we have often changed our
state;
We have been slaves and masters, serfs and
kings;
You have been man, I woman, wont to wait
Upon my lover's word; rememberings
Are in the mystic rapture that we feel
Whenever at your feet a while I kneel.

IX

Two faces haunt the stillnesses of sleep.
The first is of a woman I have known
Past years, in many lives, as on a throne
Within my heart, for whom I daily keep
Fast and high vigil while deep calls to deep;
You also stir me, like wind-voices blown
Through woodland hollows where I walk alone
When twilight and its shadows slowly creep;

And I am torn 'twixt love of you and her —
My dear Dream-Lady of some long ago —
Till past and present, pausing to confer,
Determine what I hardly dare to know:
The faces I have loved and love are one —
How you have followed me from sun to sun!

X

LAST night I crossed the spaces to your side,
As you lay sleeping in the sacred room
Of our great moment. Like a lily's bloom,
Fragile and white were you, my spirit-bride,
For pain and loneliness with you abide,
And Death had thought to touch you with his
doom,
Until Love stood angelic at the tomb,
Drew sword, smote him, and life's door opened
wide.

I looked on you and breathed upon your hair —
Your hair of such soft, brown, translucent
gold!
Nor did you know that I knelt down in prayer,
Clasped hands, and worshipped you for the un-
told
Magnificence of womanhood divine —
God's miracle of Water turned to Wine!

XI

PAOLA and Francesca, dead these years,
And lost forever unto Rimini!
Lanciotto's garden blooms no more where ye
Found love is laughter, love is also tears;
Is peace and pain, high hopes and sudden fears;
That love is gain and loss, an ecstasy
Of heaven and then hell's hot eternity;
A balm that soothes the soul, a flame that sears.

I, too, know of a secret garden where
Pale asphodels are rivals of the rose;
And all life's opposites are gathered there
Before the spirit's agony, that knows
Gladness ineffable through loving One
Who hath no equal underneath the sun.

XII

WHAT has become of our great moment when
The love we veiled was daringly revealed —
You in my arms, O Heart — and one kiss sealed
The covenant? I, who among all men
Was weakest, gained forthwith the strength of
 ten;
And you for my sake instantly repealed
Your prayer for death, that you might live and
 yield
Me title to possess your spirit's ken.

We may not ever that dear bliss renew;
But what we found has entered into me —
A change of motive and a fairer view,
As though God whispered: "Henceforth thou
 shalt be
Strong to fulfil thy soul; rise up and make
Paths and a song in deserts for her sake!"

XIII

WHAT barriers are these that bid me stand
Baffled, amazed, and wrathful at the sign
That threatens me for claiming what is mine!
Have we not walked together hand in hand
Down lanes of Devon; mused upon the sand
Beside the Bay of Naples; drunk the wine
Of famed Fiesole, where Shelley's line
Thundered of freedom for Italia's land!

Tradition built this guarded shadow-wall,
And Shelley's song hath strength to sing it
down.

Come, brave the craven face funereal,
Of Pharisees who weave of thorns a crown
For him who has not faltered at the cross,
But counts that gain which others reckon loss.

XIV

THERE needs must be misunderstandings, dear ;
For love is more than the much-written word,—
Transcends it, as the home-flight of a bird
Is distanced by the sun. Let fall the fear ;
Let Joy and constant Certainty appear
Armed with angelic swords of flame that gird
Their thighs ; for though the day with rain is
 blurred,
Hark to the singing legions of the year !

Always I find gain in lamented loss ;
Some treasure in the beaten path I tread ;
And that alone survives which bears a cross
Branded by some hot trial that is dead.
Last night as I was weeping someone cried :
“ Love cannot live save love be crucified ! ”

XV

Who is to blame that suddenly there fell
Suspicion like a shadow on our souls?
Love, who was once supreme, no more controls
The harmonies. Hark! Can you hear the bell
Across the valley of our tears that swell
The brook called Cedron? 'Tis a flood that
rolls
Between us; while Doubt in his tower tolls
Love's loss in our dear, shattered miracle.

Was it a word that somehow clouded thought?
Was it a flaw in substance of myself
That proved two tendencies within me
wrought —
Plantagenet commingled with the Guelph?
Ah, Love, if so, have patience, and behold
How God blends His base metals with the gold.

XVI

ALL night my soul groped blindly in a dream
Through mazes of a mighty corridor,
Pillared between the stars; and my heart bore
Its youthful sorrow, calling for the gleam
Shed from your golden body like a beam
Sent from the sun — a beauty nevermore
Mine to behold, to have, to cherish, for
Faith's rule was ended and Doubt stood supreme!

All night my soul groped blindly till the dawn
Woke on the world with matin song of birds
And choral thunder of the wind upon
The mountains; while the trees chanted the
words
Of an old litany that cried the grief
Of lovers sundered through their lost belief!

XVII

DEAR Love is fallen, fallen by my hand!
Lost is my Eden, closed its golden gate;
Winged seraphim, guarding the ways, await
With swords of sudden flame me to withstand.
I am that uncrowned king at whose command
Earth and the sky obeyed, things small and
 great
Bowed down to serve. Oh, terrible the fate
Of Adam, lonely in an alien land!

Henceforth in bitterness I shall eat bread.
Cursed for my sake, the fields, which day adorns
No more with fruitage of the autumn spread,
Shall bear me briars and abundant thorns;
My glory, too, shall know the moth and rust,—
Come quickly, Death, and be it: Dust to dust!

XVIII

AND I have lost you, so the voices say —
Voices that taunt, deride my silent pain;
Voices that fall incessant, like the rain
Throughout this dim and memory-haunted day!
Dear Love, come back, resume your ancient
 sway

For my strong pleading! Or is it in vain
That I beneath the stars all night have lain
Prone upon earth, clay crying unto clay?

No answer. . . . O thou God-vacated sky,
Thunder upon my head the riving flame!
There is no more for me to do but die!
Or else for One, whom now I dare not name,
At crossroads of the world a watch to keep
With those who thither come, a while to weep.

XIX

LAST night — or was it in the golden morn —
Once more I dreamed that I alone did fare
Forth into spirit-silences; and there
I found you not; my star was set! Forlorn,
I sought the kindred company of worn
And stricken souls — lost, sundered souls, who
 bear
Old and avoided crosses with each care
Woven together in their crowns of thorn.

Gods of the patient, vain endeavour, these
Claimed me and called me fellow, comrade,
 friend,
And bade me join in their brave litanies;
Because, though I had failed you, I dared bend
Before you without hope of one reward,
Save that in loving you my soul still soared.

XX

WHEN singing first my smitten heart's lament,
My thought was only turned upon my pain,
And I was also querulous with Cain,
Crying: "This thing that thou on me hast
sent

Is more than I can bear!" But now content,
Peace, and a quiet joy close the refrain
Of passionate protesting with a strain
Of dulcimers and silver trumpets blent:

For though my shame be branded on my brow,
And you in tears have driven me afar
Because I faltered and forgot my vow,
The night has still for me a single star
That will not let me quite forget your eyes —
You, and the dear dream-hours of Paradise!

XXI

SINCE we have sundered been by broken vow
Of faith and trust — the fault was mine, O
Heart —

Much have I learned of Woman and the part
She plays in shaking from the laden bow
Life's blossoms; all that has been, and is now,
And ever shall be: Science, Music, Art,
Religion, these, as from a fountain start
The rivers, have been hers — Man to endow.

So must I, wounded in the valley, call
To you, alone upon the morning-height:
Praise and thanksgiving for the throw and fall!
Vanquished by you, I shall rise up and fight
Him armed with trident and the subtle mesh —
Mankind's most ancient enemy, the Flesh!

XXII

THROUGH what dark centuries have all your
kind

Upon the cross of Sex been crucified!

Betrayed with kisses, smitten, then denied;

Mocked in the place of judgment, and made
blind

To please the ruling of some priestly mind.

Along the cobbled highroad straight and wide,

They have gone bleeding, stumbling forth, and
died

That Man through them might his redemption
find.

This your rebuke has taught me. Take my
sword,

And on your form divine my purple bear;

While, kneeling at your feet, I pledge my word

For King Love's sake in Woman's cause to fare

Against Tradition's standard — church or
state —

And be my Sister's knight and laureate.

XXIII

O WOMAN, now thy golden day's at morn!
Dawn leaps and laughs upon the waiting hills,
And sings thy freedom; for thy sorrow fills
The cup at last; and all that thou hast borne
Pleads thy release! . . . Lord Christ, and
 crowned with thorn,
Lay bare each sacred agony that spills
Blood of the crucified pure hearts and wills,
Brows, hands, and feet, the centuries have torn!

This be the song that you have taught me sing,
The strain you on my ready harp confer.
Love seeks, as sought each Christ-adoring king,
But to bow down . . . Gold, frankincense, and
 myrrh,
Are offered, not the body to possess,
Neither command, but reverently to bless.

XXIV

I AM all gladness like a little child!
Grief's tragic figure of the veiled face
Fades from my path, moving with measured
 pace
Back from the splendour that breaks on the
 wild,
High hills of sorrow, where the storm-clouds
 piled
In drift of tears. Lo! with what tender grace
Joy holds the world again in her embrace
Since you came forth, and looked on me, and
 smiled.

Down in the valley shines a scimiter —
A stream with autumn-gold deep damascened;
And of the bards of day one loiterer
Still lingers at his song, securely screened
By foliage. Dear, what miracle is this,
Transforming void and chaos with a kiss!

XXV

THERE are so many things to say and do
After that moment of our breathless bliss
When separation ends upon a kiss,
And I have passed the dreary spaces through.
Words as of one long leashed by silence who
Finds tongue at last, and, eager, would not
miss
Fulfilment of ten thousand fancies; this
Must follow my first swift embrace of you.

Secure within the palaces of thought,
And guarded by my soul as with a sword,
These fancies are; no curious eyes have caught
Their gleam and glory: you alone, Adored,
May enter the uplifted gates of gold
To hear and see what never has been told.

XXVI

THERE is a little path among the trees
That leads me to a quiet garden-plot;
Thither I go for the content of thought,
Dreams, and the quiet joy of reveries;
And in this place my simple melodies
Are sung with you beside me — fancies caught
From the swift moment, as if one forgot
The truth that cries: “Imaginings are
these!”

So have I with the magic of the mind
Called and compelled you to my lonely heart;
And never have you failed me. Now I find
No more the anguish of dead days; apart
From you I faltered; at your side I gain
Gladness from sorrow, and peace out of pain!

XXVII

COME down the woodland way a while with me.
Be still, and know the spirit of this place
That is my garden. How each flower's face
Turns to us o'er the serried rosemary
Which guard my lilies from captivity!
What slow unfolding of the harebell's grace!
What quiet moving of majestic pace
In the persistence of the shrub and tree!

Made one with Nature, you, my Love, and I
Are reconciled; for life to us is good,
Who heard a Presence in the garden cry:
"Delve earth, smite rock, plunge pool, and
 cleave the wood;
There thou shalt find Me!" . . . Dear, and we
 have found
Peace through our loyal kinsmen of the ground.

XXVIII

COMPANION of the highroad, hail! all hail!
Day on his shoulder flame of sunset bears,
As he goes marching where the autumn flares
A banner to the sky; in russet mail
The trees are trooping hither to assail
Twilight with spears; a rank of coward cares
Creep up, as though to take us unawares,
And find their stratagems of none avail.

Accept the challenge of the royal hills,
And dare adventure as we always dared!
Life with red wine his golden chalice fills,
And bids us drink to all who forward fared —
Those lost, white armies of the host of dream;
Those dauntless, singing pilgrims of the Gleam!

XXIX

HERE have we made fair songs on psalteries
Played tenderly by lovers in all lands.
Sometimes the strings are smitten by harsh
 hands
Of anger, doubt, and frowning jealousies ;
And sometimes are drawn forth sad threnodies
For dear Love dead. Let him who understands
Man's way with Woman loose the mystic bands
That bind my parabled heart-secrecies.

In dreams again o'er leagues of purple sea
My bark is borne to some far, fabled strand —
Dear, how the world is young! I seem to be
One of famed Helen's lovers ; her command
Is in your eyes as you gaze forth from Troy —
Immortal in your beauty and your joy.

XXX

MY Lady of the Sonnets, one word more,
The last; and, after, let the silence fall.
Our year is ended, and things great and small
Glow with its glory; could we live it o'er,
What would we scatter from its precious store
Of pearl, chalcedony, and topaz — all
The many-jewelled moments that we call
Love's treasure — we who had not loved before!

Into that treasure plunge we both our hands,
The while we laugh, and love, and live again.
What rainbow-splendours and what golden
sands
Fall from our fingers! . . . Now let come the
pain
And steal the shadow, moan the wintry sea;
Locked is the casket: in your hands the key!

ANTONY TO CLEOPATRA,
AFTER ACTIUM

I

DAY is all drenched with heavy rain of tears;
The silences of joy are lost in sound
Of sorrow; for I weep the wasted years —
Wasted as wine poured out upon the ground
From beakers brimming red for thirsty lips.
Hushed are the trumpets that will call no more;
Lonely and vast the spaces of the sea
Where oft my mariners have flashed the oar
And ploughed deep furrows with my scarlet
ships —
Eager and ready for the fight, and free.

II

EGYPT! My Egypt! Actium, and thou
The glory and the wonder of the world,
Titles and place, all that I had are now
Rolled up within a sphere of flame and hurled
Into the gulfs of doom; quaking of earth,
And thunder, as of gods deriding, fill
The darkness and the void of those abysses:
Yet in my anger and my anguish still
Hath Love his ancient way, stirring to birth
Dreams of the lost, dead days, thy lips and
kisses.

III

YEA, I must love thee though I fall and die!
Yea, hath my heart become for Love a lyre,
And he hath syllabled thy name, and I
Fill in each silence with a song; aspire
To rival in my rapture Euterpe.
For life or death, Elysium or Doom,
We soar and sink together through the vast
And unrevealed, dim reaches of the Room
Whose walls are Night, and its wide portals
three —
The Future, and the Present, and the Past!

IV

LEAVE thou thy chamber and its spectral
glooms;
Rise like the morn upon the mountains; stand,
My Rose of Dawn, among all lesser blooms,
And with white lilies mate each slender hand,
And let the sky grow glorious and blue
To match thine eyes! . . . Come, Queen, and
my Adored,
Clothed in thy splendour as I saw thee first!
Oh, come, ere I thwart Cæsar on my sword,
And with my body pay him what is due!
Quench with thy lips on mine, O Heart, love's
thirst.

V

WHY dost thou linger, thou the miracle
Among all marvels? Hither call the birds;
The faint, far song of rivers; silver bell
And pause of twilight, when the crooning words
Of mothers bending over babes awake
Echoes of whispers through the reeds and grass:
Let these and other voices vie with thine,
And lo! the god who vanquished Marsyas
Yields thee his harp, and one by one forsake
The nymphs their singing for thy voice divine.

VI

O BEAUTY, beauty that can never die!
O music, music meeting on thy mouth!
Challenge the wings of morning, bid them fly
Over the earth, east, west, north, and south,
To find one other woman fair as thou;
One other woman in whom harmonies
Rise up like fountains singing in the sun.
Supernal Wonder! thou art more than these
Frail jars of perfumed balsams from the bough
Of Life's tree, emptied ere the day be done.

VII

SINCE thou wast born, the dreamy lotus blows
Its blossomed buds no more in vales of ease;
Mnemosyne revives where Lethe flows
Past sad, lost souls; for he who beauty sees,
That moment lives forever, and the sight
Shatters the crystal chalices of dream;
While phantom faces form, and legions wan
And ghostly gather from the dark to stream
Out through the wide, star-studded gates of
 night,
Claiming the open portals of the dawn!

VIII

BEHOLD the chaff is beaten from the wheat:
Dost thou not hear the flails upon the floor?
Within the presses purple-stained feet
Bruise joy from out the grape, and o'er and
 o'er
The tale of Bacchus and the vine is told.
Laughter and dance and song are everywhere.
Shall we who live and love be then denied
The harvest? Nay; the fields are not all bare;
Still have they fragrant autumn gourds of gold;
The trees have yet their majesty and pride.

IX

LISTEN and hear Rome roaring from afar!
Oh, hearken to the tumult of the hordes
Of Cæsar, drunk with the red wine of war!
Blow trumpets! Clang, O brazen shields and
swords,
Your thunder to the steady march of men!
And sing, O purple pennons that unfold
Beneath the bronze-tipped menace of the
spears!
The gods! The gods are gleaming on the gold,
Wide-winged, great eagles of the Tiber, when
The standard of the Emperor appears!

X

COME, Cleopatra, from thy prison break,
And I will gather now my waiting band —
My cohorts; yea, I will rise up and shake
Over Octavius a mighty hand;
Yea, I — What sayest thou? The Queen is
dead?
O Joy of gods and men! thou couldst not die —
Never to Cleopatra could come death!
There, lad! hold thou my sword, and let me fly
On wings of love to realms unvisited
Where Cleopatra, waiting, wandereth!

PAUL TO TIMOTHY

THE long day ends at last, O Timothy,
And I, Paul, prisoner of Jesus Christ,
Wait for the dark.

Upon my window-ledge
A sparrow twitters, pecks at the iron bars
As though to set me free this night of Rome.
A lad is singing somewhere in the street;
His voice, careless and free, recalls Cilicia —
Tarsus, my city, where the Cydnus flows —
Recalls those first, far days when in my heart
No pain had found a place, and I was Saul —
Named for the Son of Kish — A Benjamite.

How swiftly Age turns back the gate of Time,
And with what eager pace pursues the path
Trode by the feet of Childhood! I can see
The scarlet-prowed Phenician ships, triremes
Down from the Tiber, and Egyptian barges,
Abundant fruitage of the date and palm,
Tall, Bacchic amphora, and perfumed bales
Of Tyrian purple, stand along the quay;
And I can hear the sailors and their songs,
The strange, brown mariners of many seas,
With arms like anchor-cables in their strength:
Oh, then was I a wanderer of earth,
And dreamed of brave adventure in far lands!

They say the Hebrew burning in my blood
Closed all life's doors, save one, upon the world;
That I, the Pharisee of Pharisees,

Contemned the beauty and the song of Greece!
How little do they know, my Timothy,
My dear disciple, and my bosom friend,
Heart, soul, feet, hands, eyes, ears, and lips of
 Paul,
How little do they know!

 To-morrow morn
Without the city wall I shall kneel down
Before the Roman sword and die!

 O Death,
Where is thy sting? O Grave. . . .
 The lad still sings!
Would thou could hear his song: Anacreon?
Nay; Sappho! He? Athenian, I think.
'Tis such a voice as that which Eunice heard —
Son of the Faith once and for all delivered —
Oft in the streets of Lystra's eventide,
Telling of Timothy returning home,
Or ever thou didst follow Christ and Paul.
Why doth he sing, and hale me back to life
Who on the morn must die? And Sappho's
 song!

Flee from this wicked world ordained to death!
The wrath of God is kindled in the sky,
And Babylon shall be consumed in smoke!

How all the gold has gone from out the west:
'Tis crimson now, and on the Forum falls
A menace as of blood!

O Babylon,
The cup of thine iniquity is full,
And runneth over even to the ground!

Still doth he sing; and always Sappho's song!
O Greece, the tongue of Homer and of Paul
Is in that song! Behold, the sound thereof
Goes forth unto the ends of all the world;
And neither speech nor language shall prevail
Upon its magic and its mastery!

How little do they know, son Timothy,
Of Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ.
A Pharisee? Yea, straitest of that sect.
Learned in the law? Aye, from Gamaliel.
And persecutor of the Church of God?
Saul who consented unto Stephen's death!
Ah, woe is me! Yet little do they know,
Who know not this: the law of sin and death
Is done away in Christ, by Whom all things
Are sanctified; and neither Jew nor Greek,
And neither bond nor free, exist in Him
Who is the First Begotten Son of God,
The Keystone of life's slow-ascending arch,
And Who completeth all things in Himself.

Nathless, I found this truth not easily:
In those far boyhood days beside the Cydnus,
Watching the sailors and the ships, I felt
Shame of my passion for the many tones

And tinctures of the coloured sails and prows,
Shame at the tumult in my heart at songs
Sung by the boatmen; for the law is hard,
And presseth with a heavy hand upon
Youth and the innocent delights of youth.

Young Rabbi Saul the Thunderer, and Saul
Consenting unto Stephen's death, are dead;
Slain by the piercing of the Cross of Christ!
Christ of the lilies — He Who loved the fields,
And heard the children in the market place
Complaining at the unresponsive feet,
And ears deaf to their piping and sweet song.

Doth He know my lad singing in the street —
My young Athenian, whose voice for Paul
Breathes *Ave atque Vale* on the world?

Christ is not quickly learned; and gradual
Is the progression of a soul to Him.
Hard strove I through the barriers of thought,
And one by one dissolved the old ideas
That misted o'er the mountains of desire,
Before I found that all things beautiful,
Like lilies of the open field, are spread
Beneath the benediction of His love.

Write this again: *There is no bond nor free!*
This is the Faith; and this is Jesus Christ,
The Saviour of the world!

Think what it means,
O Timothy, this Faith thou hast received
To give and guard at Ephesus. Let fall
Distinctions from henceforth, and keep in one
The diverse aspirations of mankind.
Jerusalem and Alexandria,
Rome, Athens, Corinth and Iconium,
Moses and Socrates, Plato and Paul,
Isaiah, Homer, and Euripides,
Bezaleel and thine own Phidias,
David and Sappho — all are in His heart!

Thou wilt remember what I lately wrote —
The feet of him who bears that letter speed,
As sped Pheidippides — “All inspired Scripture
Is given of God;” for nothing beautiful
Lives but by breathing of the Holy Ghost.

Force is of Satan; Art the child of God;
And they, who like this foredoomed Babylon
Build citadels cemented by men’s blood,
Are numbered with the damned!

Do I not know?
Am I not Paul, the prisoner of Christ?

Creators of sweet sounds and lovely forms
Care not for Babylon; they seek the hills,
And know God in the thunders of the seas;
They find Him where pomegranate and the pine

Are passionate with pleading of all souls
That are with dross of earth unsatisfied.
This have I learned from the Athenian
Who sings the song of Sappho unto Paul.

Gone are the gold and scarlet from the west;
Night falls; and Rome is like the Galaxy —
Indefinite with stars. A myriad
Of tiny flames are flaring on the hills;
And in those evening fires the souls of men
Are manifested — souls that upward burn
In emulation of the beautiful:
For the invisible, pure things of Him
From the creation of the world are seen
And understood by what is made. One God,
One Law, one Hope, one Faith, and one Desire,
Are in the impulse of creative hands,
And on the lips that sing — as sings the lad
To Paul the prisoner, great Sappho's song!

DIVES IN TORMENT

Out of the gulf of a grief that is flame,
Spent with the storm of an æon of tears,
Call I at last the Ineffable Name —
Thou Who art throned o'er the flood of the
years!

Dim are the depths of the City of Dis
Where Thou hast plunged me; an infinite pain
Harries me on to its lowest abyss,
Beats on my head in a torment of rain.

Shapes that are dreadful with uttermost hate
Follow me down, and a Voice follows after:
Stay! thou dost flee from the furies of Fate!
Hell trembles with their demoniac laughter.

Why didst Thou form me so helpless and frail
Out of the clod and allied to the star?
Lured by the vision and fashioned to fail,
Is it my fault I have fallen so far?

Why in my breast didst Thou kindle desire,
Love for the lips of a woman divine?
Why did I swoon at the sound of the lyre,
Dance and grow wild in the wonder of wine?

God, how I hate Thee enthroned in the sky;
Cruel Omnipotence torturing me!
Clenched are these manacled hands that defy
Hosts of the seraphim singing to Thee!

Paused One a moment and played on a harp,
Joyous and free in the quest of his star:
Passed and was gone, in despair of the sharp
Pain that smote me like a swift scimeter —

Pain that was memory stirred by his song —
Breath of the lily and breath of the rose,
Myrrh on the fingers of maidens that throng
Home from the pools when the day is at close:

Hark! how they sing as they carry the jars
High on the shoulder: “Home, home from the
well!

Gold on the dates is the kiss of the stars,
Soft as the kiss of betrothal that fell

Sweet on the lips when my lover claimed me
Caught in the vineyard, delayed by the moon
Orbed in the west, which I tarried to see: —
Night hath a charm that is not in the noon.”

Flight of the Seraph, thou bringest me this —
Love and the laughter of maidens who tell
Life is revealed in the breath of a kiss;
Softly they sing it: “Home, home from the
well!”

Flight of the Seraph, delay, oh, delay!
Spread wide those pinions of purple and gold;
Strike on the strings, O my Harpist, and play!
Sing me that song that they anthemed of old,

When from the dust all my members were made,
When o'er the cradle a mother looked down,
Saw me, her first-born, and clasped me and
prayed
God to bequeath me a sceptre and crown!

Sing till Jehovah is shamed by that prayer —
False to the covenant sealed by her pain,
He Who hath damned what she suckled with
care —
Sing back the years, and her love is again!

Gone is the Seraph! O God! and O God!
Thou only art left, Thou only, and I —
Wouldst have my pity? I who am a clod
Give that much, Torturer, throned in the
sky.

Man is unconquered, Jehovah hath failed;
Love and not Hate is the end of the law!
Lonely is He, and His heart is assailed
By the swift arrow He ventured to draw —

Head to the bow and the haft to the cord —
Arrow called "Judgment" and "Rod of His
Might,"
Barbed with the vengeance and wrath of the
Lord,
Winged with the flame of an infinite Right!

Yea, Thou hast pity! and Man will forgive —
Man will forgive and Thine anger forget —
Man who hath learned in the dying, to live!
Open the books, for the judgment is set:

Was I to blame that Lazarus lurked
Loathsome with sores at the banqueting hall,
Vile in return for the labour he shirked,
Begging for crumbs when the world was his all?

“The race to the swift,” the proverb hath said;
Fleet-footed I strove and won to the goal,
Got me a palace, anointed my head,
Unctioned my body and pleased my soul —

Pleased my soul that is tortured in hell!
Unctioned my body that crumbles to dust!
Got me a palace whose pinnacles fell!
Gone are the garments to moth and to rust!

Dim are the depths of the gulf of my pain!
Memory burns! . . . The fine linen! . . . The
feast!

Beautiful faces of souls I have slain!
Blood of the threatening prophet and priest!

.

Lazarus! thou like a dream in the night
Ere one awaketh to find that the day
Leaps on the hills in the joy of his might,
Sings till the shadows are driven away!

Lazarus! thou like a god in his star
Speeding through space, and whose chariot
wheels

Thunder on pavements of crystal, and jar
Hell's deep foundations! My spirit appeals,

Clamours and cries in protest of its pain,
Rages and rails at the wreck and the wrong
Done by Jehovah! Revenge is in vain;
Hate hurls at Hate with a hate that is strong!

Lazarus, why art thou come unto me?
Stand like a star on a mountain of morn,
Spirit redeemed by Jehovah's decree,
And drink to the dregs of my chalice of scorn.

Bitter the chalice of Dives' disgrace!
Shudderest thou at the purple stained brim!
Drink! or I dash the cup full in thy face —
Drink! and then back to hosannah and hymn!

Fade from my sight! and thy glory withdraw
Over the gulf to dim islands of palm,
Where the Redeemed by the blood of the law
Sing to the Lord on their harps, with a psalm!

Taunt me not, Lazarus, thou, and thy smile!
Pity or scorn I regard not! Away!
Is Paradise lonely that thou must beguile
Hell with thy holiness! What does thou say?

Nay, thou are silent; why wilt thou not speak?
This is the torment: that never a word,
Touch of a hand, or of lips on my cheek
Cloud of Gehenna's death-stillness hath stirred.

Think of it, Lazarus! Thou wast alone;
Down by the gate of my palace didst call:
"Give of thy bread!" and I gave thee a stone!
Lazarus! Lazarus! I would give all —

I would give all, for I know thou didst crave
Love, only love, who had no one to love;
Even as I who have learned in the grave
What I had missed in the earth-life above.

Life is in loving: and lonely is he
Who hath not found in the flower and fern,
Song of the bird and the hum of the bee,
Voice and a prayer as of spirits that yearn

Upward forever to fellowship; strive
Bravely for place in the legions of light;
Dauntless of death in the tempest they thrive,
Laugh and are glad of the foe and the fight.

This was my failure, who thought that the feast
Rivalled the rapture of bird on the wing;
Rivalled the lily all robed like a priest;
Smoke of the pollen when rose-censers swing.

This was my folly, who gave for a gown —
Purple and gold, and a bracelet and rings,
Shouts in the streets as I rode through the
town —
Life in the love of the kinship of things.

Lazarus! Lazarus! This is my thirst,
Fever from flame of the love I have missed;
Ache of the heart for the friends I have
cursed;
Longing for lips that I never have kissed!

Hell is for him who hath never found God
Hid in the bramble that burns by the way;
Findeth Him not in the stone and the clod;
Heareth Him not at the cool of the day.

Hell is for him who hath never found Man!
God and my Brother, I failing to find,
Failed to find me; so my days were a span
Void of the triumph of Spirit and Mind.

Once, I recall, at the table I leaned
Back on the breast of Pomona, my slave,
Saw through the window, with lattice-work
screened,
Thee in thy rags, and I laughed! then grew
grave:

Up the white street came a Man with a face
Sad with the woe and the pain of the world;
Moving with kingliness, ease, and a grace;
Crowned with wine-coloured hair wavy and
curled

Over broad shoulders, so broad that I vowed
Here was Messias — the Samson — the King!
Leaped from the table and joined with the
crowd;
Offered my purple, my bracelet, my ring!

Then through the clamour and dust of the
street
Words of rebuke were directed to me:
“Lift thou up Lazarus; give him a seat
High among all who are feasting with thee.”

Lift up the beggar! I laughed at Him there —
“Thou and Thy tattered ones take to the
street —
I to the palace . . . Begone! . . . And beware!
Caiaphas comes, and the Sanhedrin meet!

“Go! or I hale Thee to judgment of them;
Go! or Thy God shall avail Thee in vain;
Thou art of Japheth, and I am of Shem
Lazarus, outcast and cursed with Cain!

“Needs must there be a division of men;
Hewer of wood is the Gibeonite,
Cutter of stone in the quarries, and then
Slave to the Covenant-Israelite.”

“Nay, all are equal and loved of the Lord,”
Whispered the Stranger. The listening street,
Filled with the murmur of those who adored,
Hushed at the sound of His voice that was
sweet,

Stirring my heart as a harp in the hall,
Silent for ages, is stirred by the wind
Breathed through the arras; and memories call
Over the summits of spirit and mind.

Yea, for a moment I struggled with Love;
Yearned to embrace thee and pour on thy hair
Oil of anointing, and place thee above
All of the guests who were gathering there —

There in my palace of pleasure and ease,
Built by Herod, and bought with my gold,
Portaled and curtained with soft tapestries
Woven at looms of the Orient, sold

Down in Damascus. A palm in the sands,
That was my palace; a palm with a soul
Breathing of beauty when each leaf expands
Out to the desert which brims like a bowl —

Brims like a bowl of Falernian wine
Turned to the sun! O my palace and hall!
O sound of the psaltery under the vine
Grown in the garden! O footsteps that fall

Soft as the leaves in a pomegranate grove,
Soft on the pavement of beryl and pearl
Under the moon when my Miriam strove,
Laughing, to dance down the Syrian girl!

These thrust between my compassion and
thee —

Beauty that mocked like a maid from her
bower —

Beauty that looked through the lattice at
me;

Sighed: “I have tarried, my Love, for this
hour!”

Then to the palace all flaming I went,
Flaming with love for Pomona, my pride.
Back like a bow her dear body I bent,
Kissed her and placed her in joy at my side;

Crowned her with myrtle, proclaimed her a
queen;

Drank to her eyes and her lips and her hair;
Clasped on her throat of an ivory sheen
Gems of an order kings only might wear.

Oh, how she sparkled and gleamed like a sword!
Oh, how the cymbals and tabours did sound!
Oh, my Pomona, my loved and adored —
Dust of the body is dust of the ground!

.

For I forgot Him, and bought with my gold
Houses and lands. Yea, I sought far and wide
Pleasure and ease. Then one day I was
old. . . .

Darkness came over the noon . . . and I died!

Dead and companioned in pomp to the grave!
Dead and forgotten in less than a day
Save by Pomona, my mistress and slave
Sold unto Herod! . . . Oh, she had a way,

Turn of the head and glance of the eye!
Touch of the hand and a fall of the feet!
Voice that was coo of the dove and a cry
Heard in the night when the seraphim meet!

Sometimes I fancy Gehenna's abyss
Gleams with a light that is love; and I feel
Lips on my lips in the tenderest kiss,
Making hell heaven: as though the appeal

Sent from my soul to Pomona had gained
Heart and the whole of her throned on a star,
Where for an æon of bliss she hath reigned
Lonely for Dives so lost and afar!

Lazarus! Nearer! The light on thy face
Shines through the dark! Oh, what glory is
thine!

Nay, not too near lest thou see my disgrace
Naked! behold bruised the image divine!

Lazarus! Pity! Pursue not my soul
Down the last gulf! I am fearful of thee —
Not of Jehovah, Whose thunders may roll
Over my head — Have thou pity on me!

This have I learned in the torment of hell:
Man is the judge of the soul that hath sin;
Man must raise man from the depths where he
fell,
Hurled by the hand of his passion. Begin,

Lazarus, Lord of the light and the dark;
Stand on the cloud that hath bridged the abyss,
Judging my cause; for my spirit is stark
Under thy glance in abandon of bliss!

Yea, there is joy in the judgment; a peace
I have not known in an æon of pain;
Joy in the thought that thy love will not cease
Till it hath cleansed all my spirit from stain.

Therefore I hail thee, O Lazarus! cry:
“Hail to the love that restoreth the years
The locusts have eaten! Search me and try
The thought of my heart and the tale of my
tears!”

Try me and prove me; for I am undone,
Conquered by love of a love that hath sought
Me unto hell! Thou hast triumphed and won,
Lazarus, who for my spirit hath fought.

Yield I the trophies of battle; lay down
All of the pride and the hatred of heart;
Weeping I give thee my sceptre and crown;
Nothing I claim; not a tithe, not a part!

.
Lazarus, art thou the same that I saw
Begging for crumbs? Thou hast changed, thou
hast changed!
Through what dominions of wonder and awe,
Beauty and joy, hast thou ranged, hast thou
ranged?

Kingly and glorious, mantled with flame,
Lo! in thyself the Messiah I see.
Lazarus, thou and the Christ art the same,
Thou art the Christ and the Master of me —

Thou art Messias! . . . And this Para-
dise! . . .

There is Pomona! . . . There Mother who gave
Breast to her babe! . . . From Gehenna I rise
Cleansed by a love that is mighty to save!

Light, and the sound of a song that is love!
Light, and the freedom of spirit to soar!
Light, and Messias enthronèd above
High where the seraphim bow and adore!

SONNETS AND SONGS

FELLOW CRAFTSMEN

As in some workshop where the hammers ring
And bare-armed artizans toil, blow on blow,
To make each crude, imperfect member grow
To the completed plan, rise thou, and fling
Aside all doubt and languor; strive to bring
The deed up to its best; in gladness go
Undaunted; have full confidence; and know
Thou and thy God can perfect everything!

Throughout the busy day He works with us
And knows that we are tired; He hears and feels
The grind of every cog, the plaint, the fuss,
The purr of pinions in the thousand wheels
That whirl forever down the endless walls,
Where, as we toil, His light perpetual falls.

POSCA

THE light within the sky was growing dim.
Death-white, a thorn-crowned face looked from
a cross

And watched with dying eyes the soldiers toss
Dice for the seamless robe they stripped from
Him;

And of that number there was one who first
Was touched with pity for Him hanging there,
And ran a sponge of vinegar to bear,
When in His anguish Jesus said: "I thirst!"

O nameless soldier of the long ago,
Yours was the doing of a deathless deed;
Who braved the people passing to and fro,
And gave to Christ the sponge upon a reed
The while His own disciples standing near,
Dismayed, moved not to help Him in their fear.

REINCARNATION

I SAW three souls before a jasper throne
That stood, star-canopied, beyond the world
Where angels knelt before a Presence — furled
White wings and waited. In vast undertone
A Voice said: “Choose!” And instantly
were shown

Three chalices: one like a lily curled
About a stem of gold; one was empearled
In silver; one was carved from common stone.

I saw three souls sink swiftly back to earth;
I heard three children wailing in the night;
I met three men of diverse rank and birth:
A king; a priest; a slave whose wretched plight
Moved me to pity, till mine ancient dream
Recalled the proverb: “Things are not what
they seem!”

JACOB'S DREAM

LONELY and worn by day's dull toil and heat,
Life lay before me stark, and dead, and drear;
Night had engulfed the desert, and a fear
Was on me as of slow, resistless feet
Of foes invisible, from whom retreat
Denied me respite! I knew the moment near —
Jehovah's hand uplifted, and His spear
Down-glancing through the dark my heart to
meet;

And as I crouched to take the stroke that fell
Swift from the sky, a cloud of cherubim
Burst on my vision with a mighty song
That filled the wilderness, as though a bell
Chimed from afar. Then someone said: "Be
strong,
Son of the Highest! Find thyself in Him!"

KEATS

To sing, as thou didst in full throated ease,
Sweeter than thine oft-envied nightingale,
And with thy singing waken hill and dale
Until the many harpstrings of the trees
Murmured in strange and old antiphonies ;
To wander at thy will into the vale
Where sleeps Endymion, and tell the tale
Of Dian's nymphs or Pan's dear dryades :

Was it, in sooth, too great a price to pay —
The heart-ache and the passion and the tears
With which God mixed for thee life's cup of
gold?

Against the sadness of thy lot I hold
The joy of him who sees and feels and hears
Earth's splendour, fulness, music, night and
day.

A POET'S PRAYER

GIVE me pause and time for dreaming;
Send me to some quiet place
Where the winding water, gleaming,
Holds a glass before my face.

Here within the grind and clamour
I forget what I have known;
Life and love have lost their glamour,
And my heart is turned to stone.

Shrub and bird and beast are mingled
With a clumsy dream of man;
Lost the ancient art that singled
Hoof and brow of brooding Pan!

Strike the rock, release the river,
Bid it through the desert go;
Let its shallows dance and quiver,
And its flood majestic flow;

Till again the rushing rapture
Of the poet's soul is mine,
With its swift pursuit to capture
Visions that are all divine.

WHAT IS RELIGION?

WHAT is Religion? — Word of many creeds
Blared forth in streets by solemn Pharisee,
And piped in doleful tones on scrannel reeds,
Untouched by love or tender sympathy
That moves the soldier where the Master bleeds?

What is Religion? — Lofty minster-spires
And rich mosaics on the chancel wall;
Deep organ-tones, and silver-throated choirs
Whose golden Glorias night and morning fall,
With sanctus-bell and flares of altar-fires?

What is Religion? Note of bird on bough;
The sunlight falling o'er the waving grass;
A child's clear gaze and unashamed brow;
The little deeds that, living, come and pass
And are forgot: Religion is, I trow.

What is Religion? Why, who anywhere
Stoops down to touch the dusty wayside-flower,
And then as tenderly the face of care;
Who thus in love lives on from hour to hour
Has caught the secret, and has mastered prayer.

A SONG OF SPRING

LITTLE laughter of the grass;
Clapping of soft, tiny hands;
Fleeting forms that come and pass
In relays of fairy bands;
And the birds upon the wing —
Tell the secret! It is Spring!

In the woods the dryades
Hear the sounding pipes of Pan,
Leave their temples of the trees
And return to haunts of man;
This the song they sweetly sing —
Ave! Ave! It is Spring!

Domed with sapphire is the sky;
Haze of opal hath the hills;
Brown the brooks that rushing by
Call to their companion rills;
These their joyous welcome bring —
Hail! All hail! For it is Spring!

A FALLEN ANGEL

Out of the light,
Into the night,
God, I am falling!
Fashioned of flame,
Spent with my shame,
God, I am calling!

All through the day
Sin has had sway —
Lost is the token;
Evening brings
Hurt of my wings,
Blackened and broken.

Child of a star,
Thine avatar,
Drunk from the revel;
Who am I, God,—
Spirit or clod,
Angel or devil?

Yet Thou hast made
Me Thy sword-blade —
Sheathed, that its brightness
Flash up to win,
When the last sin
Burns into whiteness.

Hand that can smite,
Hold the hilt tight,
Draw, and strike faster!
Strike with me, Lord!
My soul Thy sword,
And Thou its Master.

Strike! till the day
Grow from the gray
Gloom of the peril;
And in the skies
Dream-domes arise —
Jacinth and beryl!

A LITANY

FOR what we to ourselves have done,
We who are miracles divine,
Flares from a universal sun,
Or lees from an Olympian wine;
For the abuse of laughter,
And tears that follow after;
For love betrayed, and hope delayed:
Cry we mercy, God!

For what we to ourselves have said:
“Thou hast much goods; peace, O my Soul,
Nor fret if beggars cry for bread,
And show their rags in hope of dole.
God giveth thee much pleasure,
Want is the poor man’s measure!”
For all of these dark heresies:
Cry we mercy, God!

For what we on ourselves have wrought —
Wild havoc with the weird, grotesque,
Abortive images of thought,
Making of beauty the burlesque;
For much pretence in praying;
And little heart at playing;
For smothered smiles and countless guiles:
Cry we mercy, God!

For casting dice where Jesus bleeds
Upon His cross, naked, alone;
Unheedful in the noise of creeds
Of Him and His last dying moan;
For Rahab robed in scarlet,
Cursed with the title, "Harlot,"
By the decrees of Pharisees:
Cry we mercy, God!

For the delight of out-of-doors
Missed in our minsters made of stone,
Unmindful that pure incense pours
To Thee from wild rose-petals blown
Down forest-aisles; that altar fires
Burn in the sunset on the hills,
And from the pine-wood's ancient spires
The varied chime of evening fills
All hearts with rapture; for the light
Lost on white lilies, and the blue
Of heaven wasted, the dear night
With her gold stars and silver dew
Neglected. Oh, for what we fail
To find from life so rich and fair —
The rain, the snow, the sleet, the hail,
Summer, and blossom-breathing air;
For every useless sorrow,
And fears for the to-morrow,
Not knowing Thee, great Deity:
Cry we mercy, God!

THE GREAT COMRADE

I HEAR Thy voice within the world,
Thy thunder from the heaven hurled;

I lean and listen to the trees
Chanting Thine age-long litanies.

Over white leagues of ice and snow,
Through drift and storm I watch Thee go;

Upon the sea's sad surge behold
Marks of Thy journeyings manifold.

Where lilies lowly bow the head
Some marvel of Thyself is shed;

Earth's joyous, wild, and wandering things
Are hints of Thy remembering.

From mist of stars upward to man,
Lord, all Thy ways I dimly scan.

.

To what divine and unguessed goals,
Comrade, invitest Thou all souls!

A REVERY

THE green sea surges up to land ;
I feel its salt breath on my cheek ;
In deep-throated tones it seems to speak
As it falls thundering, seething on the sand.

The wild gulls circling sweep and cry ;
A thin mist veils the crimson west ;
The great, red sun sinks swiftly down to rest ;
A dying flame crawls flickering up the sky.

Deep darkness, and the sullen boom
Of sea receding into dark ;
I hear a faint, " Hoy, heave hoy ! " I mark
A vessel's lights that pierce the gloom.

.

Night! and remoteness of the stars ;
Vast, unrevealed infinitude
Of ocean, and the interlude
Of sobbing from the sandy bars !

GOOD-BYE

DEAR, and dark, and tall
Lady of my heart,
Summer roses fall
Now that we must part!

What has happened, dear?
All the flowers are dead!
Since you are not near,
Laughter, too, is fled.

All the tender blue
Turned to tearful gray,
When I said to you,
“Good-bye,” and went away!

DAVID'S SONG TO MICHAL

From "The Witch of Endor"

O HEART, dear Heart, Heart of the wild, red
rose!

Hid in the loveliest flower that grows;
Hands of the seraphim scatter, let fall
Myrrh from thy leaves in the garden of Saul.

O Heart, dear Heart, Heart of the wild, red
rose!

Breath from the lips of the cherubim blows
Soft on thy petals; they whisper and call,
Laugh and are glad in the garden of Saul.

O Heart, dear Heart, Heart of the wild, red
rose!

Flame from the gold of the Mercy Seat glows,
Shines like a star on my love's festival;
Michal is mine in the garden of Saul!

DAVID BEFORE SAUL

From "The Witch of Endor"

Down by the stream of the waters
Came the king; and his face was sad,
Sad with a grief beyond belief,
For a bitter grief he had:
To be a king means sorrowing —
A king may not be glad.

Down by the stream of the waters
Came the king, and alone at night;
His robe was torn, a crown of thorn
Was on his brow so white:
They placed it there, who did not care
His eyes with tears were bright.

Down by the stream of the waters,
Where it flows through the valley of death,
He came, the king, all sorrowing;
A sob was in his breath:
They broke his heart, who stood apart —
The crowd that wondereth.

A VILLANELLE OF FATE

WHEN the day of life is done,
And the tools are laid aside,
We shall slumber one by one.

Norns their threads of fate have spun —
Lust and virtue, grace and pride —
When the day of life is done.

All that we have here begun
Must be scattered far and wide;
We shall slumber one by one.

Gone the folly and the fun,
Spilled the wine and spent the tide,
When the day of life is done.

By the marge of Acheron
Shall dear dreams be then denied,
When we slumber one by one?

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Build your tower to the sun!
Surely death may be defied.
When the day of life is done,
Shall we slumber one by one?

ONE WOMAN

O LIGHT that overflows,
O wind that wildly blows,
O sweet and tender grace,
All in One Woman's face!

O love that is like fire,
O pain that is desire,
O melodies that start,
All in One Woman's heart!

